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ABSTRACT

Based on an examination of 50 general social studies textbooks, the report discusses the most frequently found biases, misconceptions, omissions, inaccuracies, and misrepresentations. Criteria for judging the textbooks include: readable and suitable materials; accurate and current content; presentation of Africa as a diverse continent; open presentation of economic and political differences, and of African and global interdependence; depiction of history beginning with ancient times rather than with the arrival of the white man; inclusion of Africa's musical and artistic heritage; and use of African authors and sources. Common problems in textbooks are failure to mention African resistance to colonization and the negative effects of colonialism, misinterpretations of independence movements, the misconception that Africa is a rain forest, overemphasis on wild life, and use of the word "tribe" when ethnic, linguistic, or regional group would be more accurate. Failure to depict various marriage customs, lack of emphasis on representative groups, and emphasis on the exotic or "weird" are other problems. Also, inaccurate information, biases and misrepresentations exist about the apartheid policy in the Republic of South Africa, political instability, and African religions. Lists of textbooks reviewed, recommended general references, and references for problems discussed in the report are included. (KC)

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AFRICA IN SOCIAL STUDIES TEXTBOOKS

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PREFACE

This work grows out of the innovative and energetic program of educational outreach which has been developed by the African Studies Program of the University of Wisconsin-Madison since 1973. Evaluation of teaching materials related to Africa, and effective communication of such evaluations to the teachers in the schools, has been a major objective of the outreach program from the beginning. Marylee Wiley directed the program of outreach from its beginning until February 1977, when she accepted her present position as Curriculum Specialist at Michigan State University. Her work at Wisconsin was supported from funds received under the Office of Education Foreign Language and Area Studies Center Program (under Title VI of the National Defense Education Act of 1958) as well as from the University of Wisconsin. Astair Zekiros has served since 1975 as Foreign Curriculum Consultant to the University of Wisconsin African Studies Outreach Program under grants under the Office of Education Foreign Curriculum Consultant Program. Her work has also been generously supported by the University of Wisconsin and the Cudahy Foundation. Although the manuscript was substantially completed before Ms. Wiley's departure from the University of Wisconsin, editing of the paper was carried out by her at the African Studies Center of Michigan State University, with support from Office of Education and Michigan State University funds. The contribution that has been made by all of the institutions and funding programs named above is gratefully acknowledged.

It is well known that Africa has been neglected in American educational curricula at all levels. It is heartening that in recent years a number of useful bibliographic and critical guides to teaching materials on Africa have appeared. These are too numerous to cite here, but the Outreach Centers of the University of Wisconsin and Michigan State University will be happy to provide information on request. We wish, however, to single out for particular mention a recent work, *Africa in U.S. Educational Materials* by Susan Hall. Published by the African American Institute, Ms. Hall's excellent discussion is particularly recommended to accompany the present work.

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PART A - TEACHING ABOUT AFRICA: Introduction, Criteria, Objectives, and Overview of Social Studies Materials

INTRODUCTION

This paper originated from a reading of many general social studies texts published for use in American schools in kindergarten through senior high. Many problems were apparent in materials used to teach about Africa, and they were sufficiently common and serious enough to warrant a general written response. This paper does not offer critical reviews of individual texts. It is intended to raise many of the most frequently found biases, misconceptions, omissions, inaccuracies, and misinterpretations found in general social studies textbooks including history, geography, world and area studies, etc. This guide is problem-centered but is not an overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the texts. Over 50 general texts were read, and all of the problems discussed were drawn from these books. A few quotations are drawn from texts specifically on Africa, but these have been selected only where the problem is more clearly illustrated in the African rather than in the general text. Although no more than three examples or quotations are used to illustrate any one problem, there may be as many as 30 or 40 texts in which that problem is found. We have limited ourselves to quoting those most illustrative of the issue under consideration.

Extensive quotations are given throughout the paper to provide substantive content in response to the stated problems. This material is frequently illustrative of the kind of information found in the recommended readings listed at the end of the paper.

Texts used in Wisconsin schools and deposited in the University of Wisconsin-African Studies Program Instructional Materials Center were used for this paper. Most of them have been published since 1965.

We hope that this study will give assistance to teachers, librarians, and curriculum consultants who are concerned about the quality of materials used in their schools. It should serve as a supplementary guide for evaluating materials now being used or those being considered for adoption.

A study completed in 1968 by Barry Beyer and E. Perry Hicks, testing the cognitive and affective understanding of American 7th and 12th grade students regarding African studies, provided a very gloomy picture.¹ More students held negative stereotypes about African peoples, cultures, history and physical environment at the twelfth grade level than at the seventh. Even well-prepared teachers with adequate teaching materials cannot overcome widely and strongly held negative stereotypes about Africa—stereotypes which emerge again and again in the press, television, movies, comic books, etc. It is difficult to correct these ethno-centric and uninformed judgements which are expressed almost daily in the media. For example, in July of 1975, Eric Sevareid made the following statement: "The truth is that there is very little in most of

the African and Asian nations worth anything in twentieth century terms that was not put there by westerners. The truth is that in spite of their talk about returning to their own cultural roots—remember Africanization—what they want to be is what the West already is."²

The Beyer and Hicks test results also indicate a lack of high quality teaching materials and a lack of adequate teacher training in African studies. Our experience in the past several years of visiting schools leads us to believe that the findings of Hicks and Beyer remain generally valid. There are outstanding exceptions where African studies are taught by exceptional teachers seeking up-to-date and relevant ideas, methods, and materials.

Attempts are being made now to produce quality materials about Africa. Some publishing houses are upgrading their material. Various organizations and institutions are evaluating and recommending materials which lead to new understandings and appreciation of African culture, past and present. The growing concern for education in global issues is resulting in the development of stimulating and provocative studies and classroom materials in global education. However, the gap between producing these new materials and having them used in classrooms across this country remains large.

Teacher training is another crucial area of work. Formal, professional preservice training as well as inservice professional development must be pursued as avenues for reaching teachers. Substantive content about African culture as well as materials and methods for teaching need to be offered throughout the country. Efforts in these directions are under way in several parts of the United States, but they are understaffed and under-funded.

We must note that misconceptions and stereotypes about "other" people are not limited to the American public. Views of America as a place with goldlined streets and abundant wealth for all are perpetuated in the minds of many African young people. Television programs and motion pictures create these images and those of the cowboys and gangsters which also become stereotypes about this country. Educators in Africa have such obstacles to overcome just as educators in America do.

This is the overwhelming task—to discuss with educators the priorities, methods, and materials for teaching about Africa. African studies are most commonly taught by social studies teachers, although art, music, French, English, mathematics, and science teachers have taught about Africa, too. The demands on social studies teachers' time are so great that it would take a Renaissance-type mind to grasp all of the local, regional, national, international, and cosmic issues they presumably have studied and are expected to be able to teach. Their work is endless. Those who

take it seriously are overwhelmed. Outside help is essential. We hope that this paper will assist teachers with or without African studies training to identify common problems in instructional materials about Africa. Additional consultations are available in Wisconsin through the African Studies Program IMC, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1450 Van Hise Hall, Madison, Wisconsin 53706 (608-262-9689 or 262-2380) and in Michigan, through the African Studies Educational Resource Center, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan 48824 (517-353-1700). Other university programs serving educators in international studies can be identified through a listing available from Indiana University.³

CRITERIA AND OBJECTIVES

The most critical question underlying a study of this sort is what are the objectives and criteria used in evaluating materials in African studies? What we seek is a general understanding of Africa on its own terms, recognizing its cultural uniqueness and its common humanity. Students come to African studies with preconceived notions of Africa and Africans. These notions mean that we begin our teaching, not from a point zero, as in foreign language, science, or math, but below zero. We begin with students who hold negative attitudes. One of the primary criteria for judging teaching objectives and materials is the extent to which these objectives and materials correct the stereotypes and opinions held by students.

African visitors to this country are astounded when they are asked if their families live in trees; if they have ever been attacked by lions; if there are cars and schools in Africa; if they ever knew a Bushman, etc.

Even a short unit on Africa can do much to challenge these too commonly held attitudes and ideas. Although this paper focuses on common problems in social studies textbooks, the general criteria used for evaluation are somewhat more universal in their application. Many of these are exemplified in greater detail in the subsequent portions of this paper.

1. Are the materials readable and suitable for the class?
2. Is the content accurate and up-to-date?
3. Does the material lead the reader to understand the diversity of the climatic and physical features of Africa? Are the common stereotypes that all Africa is jungle and desert defeated? If Africa is studied under a "hot and wet lands" unit, does other material balance this? Does the student learn that Africa has snow-capped mountains, temperate highlands and vast grassland savannahs?
4. Does the beginning student learn that Africa is a continent, not a country? Frequently, Africa is studied in a sequence including China, India, Japan, and Mexico. Africa is a continent and is not parallel to country studies. Choosing one or

more African nations as particular case studies would help to remedy this problem.

5. Does the material lead the reader to understand the diversity of contemporary African peoples? Does it therefore avoid easy generalizations such as, "All tribes have chiefs" or "Africans love to dance?" Does the material avoid the common pitfall of emphasizing the exotic, such as the so-called "Bushmen" or "Pygmies?" Are urban dwellers included in the material along with nomads, fishermen, and farmers? Are the diversities within these groups of people acknowledged? Are the varied social, economic, and political institutions discussed within the continent, region, or country? Are urban areas studied to overcome the common stereotype that all African people are poor rural farmers and to illustrate the importance of urban areas as centers of political and economic power?
6. Are political and economic differences presented with openness? Do discussions of one-party states include material in defense of the one-party system as well as criticism of it? Are socialist governments examined with candor and balance? Are military governments studied in the historical context through which they came to power? Or are these topics presented and judged against a belief that the basic American two-party political system and free enterprise economic system are the best for everyone everywhere at all times? Is the text biased by interpreting African politics in light of the East/West or the Soviet/U.S. power struggle? Or are diverse African positions explained, including those of the non-aligned, neutral nations which take different positions on different issues if and when it is in their self-interest? Is the question of communism in Africa given honest appraisal? Or does the material reflect the very common assumption that African nations are puppets manipulated by the Soviets? Is Western imperialism examined as critically as Soviet imperialism? Are the terms "imperialism," "communism," "non-aligned," etc. defined and used carefully?
7. Are issues of interdependence raised both within Africa and globally? Are the roles of other governments, private corporations, and international agencies (Organization of African Unity, United Nations, World Bank, Pan-African movements, etc.) included in discussions of political, economic, and cultural issues? Can the student find discussion of the problems of economic dependence on single commodities, of foreign control of markets, of problems of access to technology and capital? Is the diaspora of black people around the world and especially in North America presented as an example of African cultural heritage and interdependence?

8. Is history presented beginning with ancient times rather than with the arrival of the white explorer in Africa? Does the material avoid such ethno-centric statements as "Livingstone discovered Victoria Falls," which reveals a biased white and Western interpretation of history? Is the colonial period described from this bias or are African points of view included?
9. Is there an artificial separation of Sub-Saharan Africa from North Africa, or are the important cultural diversities and continuities presented as part of the complexity of the whole continent? If the material is about Sub-Saharan Africa, what place do Saharan countries and countries of the Horn of Africa have? If one is attempting a general overview of Africa, or if one is choosing specific country studies, North Africa should be included with the rest of Africa. Although North African countries are closely related to the Middle East through religion and culture, they are part of the continent of Africa. Some historians no longer consider the Sahara Desert a barrier, but rather a crossroads, linking the peoples of the north to those living in the Sahara and south of it. For centuries these linkages have been important means of trade, both in goods and in ideas. Islam is not unique to North Africa, but extends throughout West Africa and into Eastern and Central Africa to a lesser extent.
10. Is the complex and rich musical and artistic heritage of Africa presented as a valuable part of life? Are urban and contemporary musical and artistic expressions studied? Are diverse artistic and musical forms studied? Or is there a limited emphasis on drums and masks or statuary?

Students are interested in learning that jazz has its roots in African music and that African young people are frequently as enthusiastic about contemporary and rock music as young people here are. American students are usually surprised to hear about electric guitars in African bands. Likewise, the influence of African art on European and American art (Picasso, Romare Beardon, Klee, etc.) as well as the reverse (Msangi, Gebre Kristos Desta) are important ways to illustrate the idea of cultural interdependence.

11. Are African authors and sources used? Is African literature included in the curriculum to communicate specific African points of view about societies, belief systems and historical or current events? Are primary sources such as diaries, treaties, transcripts of oral narratives and histories from Africa used to give a diverse range of opinion on a topic?
12. Are the value judgments of the author exposed and examined? Does the material avoid words

with strong negative connotations such as "tribal," "primitive," "uncivilized," "witch doctor?" When "under-developed" is used, is it clear that this is in reference to industrial technology, not to structures of human relations? Are students urged to identify value-laden terminology, to examine the authors' values, to examine their own values? Are differences treated with respect rather than deprecation or condescension?

13. Are African peoples and African cultures the central theme of the material rather than events of outsiders such as explorers, missionaries, business people, etc.? Many books fall into the trap of studying about Africa through the eyes of Westerners who wrote about their experiences there. African events should be the focus of study about Africa. Outsiders' experiences can be interesting, but they should not dominate the material.
14. Does the material lead the reader to appreciate differences, to understand commonalities, and to evaluate and adapt his or her views of human society in such a way that will lead to a just and peaceful world? Do the students come to understand that we have much to learn from African peoples as well as much to give? Is a notion of respect and reverence for human life, young and old, rich and poor communicated beyond the tedious statistics of gross national product, ratio of persons to cars, literacy rates, etc? Is there a sense of valuing human life and relationships without all of the material comforts found in industrialized societies?

OVERVIEW OF SOCIAL STUDIES MATERIALS

Generally, social studies texts published since 1970 are superior to those published before that date. Several excellent publications in African studies *per se* are available to supplement general texts.

Sufficient and high quality materials are still lacking in some important areas of study; for example—nonfiction materials for use in lower elementary classes on family life, communities, and nations; middle and high school materials on urban cultures, early history, and religions in Africa, especially readable materials on Islam and other indigenous religions; materials in English about French-speaking African countries; materials about one-party governments and military rule; global issues of interdependence with Africa as a focus.

On the other hand, there is a surfeit of materials in other areas:

- fictional biographies of children in rural areas
- anthropological studies of isolated unrepresentative groups of people (example—"Pygmies," "Bushmen")
- studies of supposedly unchanging rural societies
- books on wild animals

- adventure stories, especially of Westerners in Africa
- over-generalized short books on the entire continent.

Most of these undergird and reinforce the stereotypes now held about Africa. Most of them are written by "arm chair" authors who rely on weak sources for their own information. These materials too often form the basis of study for courses on Africa. They are frequently all that is available to teachers who must rely on local resources.

Public libraries and instructional materials centers in schools also serve as sources for student projects and small group or individual studies about Africa. It is not surprising, therefore, that many projects on

housing are limited to thatched ones, or ones on animals are limited to big game. It is imperative that teaching materials in classrooms, libraries, and in instructional materials centers be evaluated and weeded to reflect a new understanding of priorities and objectives in teaching and learning about Africa.

Part B of this paper discusses several specific issues which need careful scrutiny by curriculum consultants and teachers concerned with African studies. While many of them are more relevant for high school level teaching, they are all important for teachers at any level as they seek to be aware of common misunderstandings and biases in materials about Africa. There is no particular order to the issues presented.

PART B. — COMMON PROBLEMS OF GENERAL SOCIAL STUDIES TEXTBOOKS

I. AFRICAN RESISTANCE TO COLONIZATION

When writing about the colonization of Africa by European nations, many authors fail to mention the numerous wars fought by African peoples against those Europeans who sought to annex areas of the continent. This major omission creates an incorrect image of Africans as passive peoples who did not object to colonization. There are enough written sources dealing with African resistance to European takeover to allow textbook authors to provide information on this important aspect of African history. It is impossible to understand the African past as well as the present without studying African reactions to colonial rule. When texts fail to discuss African resistance, we suggest that teachers use supplementary materials such as *The History of African Civilization* by E. Jefferson Murphy. This book offers an excellent brief view of resistance to colonization in some African societies.

There is no way to estimate the number of African lives exacted by the wars, reprisals, massacres, and executions that accompanied European conquest. What figures are available, however, bear grim testimony to the African spirit of resistance. Some 20,000 Sudanese lives were lost in the bloody battle of Omdurman alone, when Kitchener and his Anglo-Egyptian army defeated the troops of Mahdist Sudan.

Two other series of wars, both resulting from German "pacification" efforts, show the dimension of African resistance as well as the brutal determination of Europe to implant its rule on Africa. In South West Africa (which is today called Namibia by the United Nations and the African liberation movement that is trying to free it from alien rule), the Herero-German war of 1904-06 is believed to have resulted in the death of approximately two-thirds of the entire Herero population . . .

By 1906, when effective Herero resistance had ceased, between 60,000 and 75,000 Herero had been killed, leaving a population of only 25,000 or 30,000.

In Tanganyika the toll in lives was even higher. There the Germans met resistance almost from the moment they set up a government, a few years after 1884. The coastal Swahili began a war of resistance in 1888, when the first German garrisons were set up in the coastal cities. They forced the Germans to evacuate Kilwa, Lindi, and Mikindani, and attacked the main German fort at Dar es Salaam. At first the German forces were heavily on the defensive and were unable to make headway against the Swahili troops. In 1889, however, the German navy, aided by ships from Britain, Italy, and Portugal, blockaded the coast, shutting off supplies of arms and ammunition. By 1890, the Germans had finally defeated the Swahili and restored an uneasy peace to the coast.

Swahili resistance on the coast was only the forerunner of the African reaction to German conquest. In 1891-94 the Hehe and Gogo peoples of central Tanganyika fought

fiercely against the German troops that came to set up garrisons in the interior. Well-equipped German soldiers and a brutal German policy of reducing villages to ashes and destroying crops and food supplies subdued the two peoples. The Chagga peoples who live around the slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro in northern Tanganyika, and the Yao and Ngoni peoples of southern Tanganyika also resisted valiantly. But, between 1892 and 1895, they too were defeated by superior German arms and organization. The attitude of Tanganyika's African peoples was abundantly clear: they opposed German rule and colonization, and were prepared to defend their freedom and their lands. . . .

The author goes on to discuss the wars of resistance Africans fought for many years against the French in Senegal, Guinea, Dahomey and throughout the Sahara area and against the British in present day Ghana and Nigeria. On the armed resistance the colonizers had to overcome in Southern Africa, Murphy notes:

The British South Africa Company had induced several thousand British settlers, both from South Africa and from Britain, to come to farm the fertile lands of the Rhodesian plateau. The company also attracted many employees for mining, trading, and administration. Both the Shona, the land's ancient inhabitants, and the Matabele, the conquerors of the western part of the plateau only a few decades before, lost large tracts of land, found their movements and freedoms severely constricted and the demands made upon them for labor and taxes onerous. In 1896, the two peoples, acting in a coordinated effort that was remarkable considering the traditional hostility between them, attacked British farms, mission stations, and settlements. They also sent large armed parties to attack the larger towns. Their onslaught was so vigorous that the British were almost overwhelmed, retreating into the sanctuary of several of the larger towns. The well-equipped troops of the British South African Company, even when augmented by the settlers, had to appeal for help from both the British governments and Cecil Rhodes. This help came almost immediately, in the form of new troops and supplies, and soon the Africans were driven from areas around the towns and near the major roads. Less than a year after the war started, most African belligerents were conducting guerrilla campaigns from remote areas. Within a few more months the beleaguered Matabele were ready to discuss peace terms, and Rhodes himself came to arrange a treaty. The Shona continued to fight for nearly a year longer, until most of their leaders had been captured and executed.

African resistance in Rhodesia involved so much of the population that it was more of a popular revolution than a series of skirmishes. Old men, women, and even children joined in some of the attacks against the hated white oppressors, despite the hail of machine gun bullets that killed them by the hundreds. The causes of this fervent popular uprising are various but had much to do with the proud history of the people. This was, after all, the land of Changamire and Great Zimbabwe, where the Shona had for a thousand years tilled their fields while

their rulers created a great culture and imperial state. The state, and its noble Rozwi rulers, had been smashed decades before, when the Zulu forces of Zwangendaba destroyed Zimbabwe and The Rozwi houses and shrines. Though there was no longer a centralized political system, and the Rozwi held power only in a few areas, their prestige was still alive in the memory of many ordinary Shona. The leaders who helped organize the uprising against the British included many Rozwi. Their stature encouraged the people to believe that they might humble the arrogant whites and, at the same time, restore an ancient glory.

The Matebele in the west were themselves intruders, disliked by the Shona whose lands they had occupied. But they had come to develop their own roots in the country and to absorb some of its culture. They also had as much reason as the Shona to detest the British settlers. The two groups planned jointly and coordinated their attacks and campaigns. When the leaders of the Matebele accepted peace in 1897, one group of warriors joined the Shona and continued the fight.⁵

Other wars of resistance took place in Togo, Cameroun, Rwanda-Burundi, Algeria, Ethiopia and in other parts of Africa. Thousands of African people were killed during the Hundred Years' War in South Africa and in other battles of the Zulu and Basuto resistance to Dutch and British encroachments in southern Africa. Not all the efforts made to resist colonization were futile. Between 1870 and 1900 the Ethiopians crushed the Italian army near Adowa, the Sudanese defeated the British army near Khartoum and the Zulus gained victory over English forces. In many areas Africans won battles. But the superior weapons of the Europeans finally led to the colonization of almost the whole continent.

II. EFFECTS OF COLONIALISM

The positive effects or results of colonial contact (example—medical and agricultural technology) are frequently emphasized more than the numerous negative effects. Sometimes disadvantages accrued to African peoples as the result of colonialism are described by authors as advantages. This gives an unbalanced and unduly favorable picture of the European colonizer because the negative effects of colonialism outweigh its limited positive results for many Africans. This biased emphasis of such authors fails to take into account the physical, emotional, spiritual, economic, social and political sufferings and indignities which were endured under colonial rule. The following paragraph is an example of this kind of misleading information:

When the Europeans first came they found they could not get the valuable raw materials without changes in African life. They built roads and railroads to bring the ore and other products to the sea. They brought schools and better health to many Africans. They trained Africans to run the railroads and to work in the offices. They educated Africans for a certain amount of leadership. This system is sometimes described as imperialism or colonialism.⁶

This statement explains "imperialism or colonialism" as beneficial in terms of economic, educational, and medical changes, even though it usually had many more negative effects. Colonialism in Africa meant economic exploitation, loss of political independence, experiences of physical cruelties (such as flogging and forced labor), subjection to European racism and arrogance, disintegration of the family in the migratory labor system (caused by European imposition of cash taxes), destruction of old social structures, and many other factors. Furthermore, the relatively few economic gains of colonial rule were not part of a deliberate process to benefit African people but were side effects of measures taken to enrich and to serve the needs of colonizers. These few gains could have been made without the colonial presence. For example, in many parts of Africa, missionaries, rather than colonial rulers first established clinics, hospitals, and formalized secular education. Schools for secular education, hospitals, etc. were established in Ethiopia without colonial rule.

Very few Africans benefitted from the gains of colonial rule—and even then some of the benefits had a negative side. On colonial education, historian Basil Davidson notes:

Even in this educational field, however, the balance of gain was not a simple one. There was public education, true enough; but throughout the colonial period this was never more than sparsely available, even at an elementary level, and was couched most clearly in the concepts and prejudices of the educators. Even if it may have been rare that French history books taught Africans that their ancestors were Gauls, the spirit of the teaching was exactly in that vein: it taught African inferiority and European superiority. For the greater part, moreover, it was designed to do no more than provide a little primitive literacy and counting for hewers of woods and drawers of water. It ranged from a relatively high percentage of children at primary schools, after 1945, in the British and French territories and in the Belgian Congo, to the pathetic levels of the Portuguese "civilizing effort," in Angola and Mozambique, where less than one per cent of African populations have ever seen the inside of a school, no matter how rudimentary.

So far as secondary education is concerned, there is no exaggeration in saying that the whole of tropical Africa possessed only a handful of secondary schools up to the time of political independence in the late 1950s. Some of the characteristic examples must make painful reading for Europeans who have wished to believe in the reality of "trusteeship." After forty years of British administration in Tanganyika, a population not far short of ten million people was able to enroll exactly 318 pupils in the class of standard 12 (the last in the four-year secondary course), while the number of school-certificates, permitting pupils to carry on with their studies, was 245. Taking the three British East African territories together—Kenya, Tanganyika, and Uganda—the official figures show that populations totalling some twenty-four million were able to achieve, after several decades of "trusteeship," fewer than 2,000 school-certificates every year: fewer than one, that is, for every 12,000 people. In West Africa the position was generally rather better; elsewhere, it was

often much worse. After thirty-three years of Crown Colony rule in Southern Rhodesia, official figures for 1958 showed that 12,158 African children entered school at the bottom of the scale, in sub-standard A, while the number who got through to the top, standard 12, totalled exactly thirteen; and this, one may note, for an African population of more than two million.

For the majority, then, colonial education either had no meaning, because it did not touch them, or none that was useful as an instrument of cultural enlightenment.⁷

Sometimes textbooks not only emphasize and exaggerate the few positive effects of colonial rule, thus giving an unbalanced picture of the situation, but also contain biased views which interpret losses by African peoples as positive gains. The following paragraph from a high school textbook reveals this kind of problem:

France brought prosperity as well as peace to northwest Africa. It developed the mineral resources of the region, particularly the valuable phosphate and hard coal deposits of Morocco. It turned coastal Algeria into a second France, with vineyards and olive groves, excellent hotels and highways, and busy centers of trade. On a smaller scale, it did much the same thing for Tunisia. It built fine schools and hospitals in many places. In these and other ways too numerous to mention, it greatly raised the standard of living among the native people and greatly lowered their death rate. But it failed to make them happy.

The French policy in dealing with subject peoples has been, as far as is humanly possible, to turn them into Frenchmen. In many respects the French were fair and generous in their dealings with the native North Africans. But many of the Arab people, who make up by far the largest percentage of the population, were proud of their own traditions and devoted to their own ways of life. They did not want to be made into second-rate Frenchmen. They wanted to be citizens of their own country, not of a Greater France. Like colonial people everywhere else, they wanted to manage their own affairs in their own way.⁸

Some of the statements given in these paragraphs are factual and correct. The death rate in these areas was greatly lowered during the colonial period. The two reasons given to explain why the peoples of northwest Africa were unhappy with French rule are true. These Africans did not want "to be made into second rate Frenchmen" and also wanted "to manage their own affairs."

But the prosperity of northwest Africa under French colonial rule was the prosperity primarily of Frenchmen and other Europeans and not of north Africans. Some of this prosperity was acquired at the expense of the indigenous people. The mineral resources of Morocco were exploited for the benefit of France and of Europeans in Morocco. Morocco was agriculturally very productive before the period of French administration and exported cereals and other foodstuffs. But under French rule, the indigenous

population was systematically deprived of a substantial amount of the best land. Before the French conquest of 1830, Algeria was agriculturally very productive and by nineteenth century standards, Arab education was widespread with about forty percent of the population having attended Koranic schools. Under French colonial rule, Algerians lost the coastal areas to Europeans mostly because of confiscations after the conquest. The Europeans, who occupied this fertile region of the country, benefitted from government support, including guaranteed prices for certain products, credit, improvements, and protection. True, they "turned coastal Algeria into a second France, with vineyards and olive groves, excellent hotels and highways, and busy centers of trade," but only for European settlers after depriving the indigenous owners of their fertile land. Before the revolution of 1954, which eventually led to Algerian independence, Europeans owned about one-third of the arable land and nearly all of the best land. The average European holding was 17 times that of an Algerian. On the Algerian situation under French rule, Professor Brace notes:

By the end of the French period, half the agricultural output found its way into European pockets; yet 97 percent of the rural population were Muslims [Algerians]. Many were forced to earn wages on European-owned land or to go to France to work. Increasingly the expanding Muslim population moved toward pauperization.⁹

France had established some industry in Algeria. But, again, this was not for the benefit of Algerians since "90 percent of industry and the profits of industry and agriculture fell into European hands."¹⁰

In 1950 in Morocco, only six to seven percent of the school-age Moroccans attended school. In 1954, after over 120 years of French rule, 94 percent of Algerian males and 98 percent of the females remained illiterate in French. At the University of Algiers, four-fifths of the 5,000 students were Europeans. Only seven percent of civil service and other white-collar jobs went to Algerians although they comprised 95 percent of the day laborers. Ninety percent of the unemployed were native Algerians.

III. INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENTS

When dealing with the causes and results of the independence movements after 1940, many textbooks are subject to two shortcomings:

a. They state that the African countries "received," were "given," or "granted" their independence by the various European colonizing nations. For example: "In 1960 the Belgian Congo, along with more than a dozen other African countries, received its independence."¹¹ "Kenya was granted independence from Britain in 1963."¹² "In 1957, Britain granted independence to one of its colonies in western Africa. The new nation chose 'Ghana' as its name. By the end of 1960,

Ghana was joined by 18 more new African nations, all having been freed from European colonial rule."¹³

The colonizers did not simply "give" Africans their independence, for this was not in the colonists' economic and political interest. Africans "achieved" or "won" their independence through various means and efforts. When textbooks state that Africans were "given" their independence, they give students an impression of passive rather than active Africans seeking independence from colonizers. This impression of passiveness, in turn, creates a chain of false and negative images of Africans and their values.

b. The second common misinterpretation of the independence movements in Africa involves a major error concerning the source of motivation for African independence. Often we are told that Africans wanted their independence because the ideas of freedom and independence were taught to them in the schools of the colonizers or in Western universities. The following statements from three textbooks are examples of this shortcoming, which is found in most of the textbooks listed:

Desire for Independence. Western ideas were spread by the Europeans to their colonies. A number of young Africans and Asians were educated in European schools and universities. They learned about democratic political systems developed by Europeans. Nationalism, democracy, and parliamentary government were some Western ideas which were adopted by non-Western people. When the students began returning to their native homes, the Europeans faced a struggle to keep their colonies: Why?¹⁴

The campaign for African independence took root in the conviction that African students in France, England, and America came to hold. Their people should be free. These young men returned to Africa to pull together the many peoples of their countries into nations seeking independence . . . By blaming all African troubles on "colonialism," they built a desire for independence that could not be resisted. Thus colonial rule set Africa on a new path of change that led Africans to seek independence from their colonial rulers. As a colonial ruler said of Britain's African subjects: "Their very discontent is a measure of their progress."¹⁵

The ideas of freedom and independence were taught to Africans at the schools set up by European colonising nations . . . They learned about individual liberty and national freedom. They began to copy the ways of the Europeans.¹⁶

In other words, many authors imply that Africans never appreciated freedom and independence before their colonizers taught them to do so. This view fails to take into account the history of the armed struggle of many African societies against the colonizers when they first arrived as well as after they were established.

We have briefly discussed the history of African resistance to colonization in various parts of Africa. Revolts and rebellions against established colonial rule also were carried out by Africans long before Western education was introduced. For example, in 1898, the Mende rebellion in Sierra Leone against the

British hut tax involved a large number of rural people who had never attended Western schools.

In 1927-30, there was a general insurrection among the Gbaya of the present Central Africa Empire. Due to this insurrection, which started as a protest against forced labor and forced cotton planting, the French lost control of the rebel territory for years and, finally, had to repeat the conquest at great expense. In eastern Nigeria the British introduced direct taxation in the form of a head tax paid by all adult males. A rumor spread that women were to pay the head tax too. This led to a rebellion in 1929 which spread over a large area. Groups of women attacked colonial courts and administrative offices and destroyed European-owned shops. It took the military several months to suppress the rebellion. Over 55 women lost their lives.

Murphy gives a brief description of another example of a war for self-determination by non-Western educated people, the "Maji Maji Rebellion" in Tanganyika:

Although the wars of resistance took thousands of lives, they were modest compared to the great "Maji-Maji rebellion" in Tanganyika, which came some twenty years after Germany first claimed the country. In 1904, the African population of central Tanganyika had been "pacified." Yet it grew increasingly resentful of the German style of rule. German administrators, backed by garrisons of professional officers and African mercenaries, had levied heavy taxes on all adult males and had used harsh methods to force African labor to work on numerous construction projects. One especially odious and clumsy effort was a German experiment of introducing cotton as a cash crop, and attempting to force African subsistence farmers to grow it for market.

In 1905, when resentment was widespread, a semireligious movement began, led by African priests who preached that men who took certain potions and oaths would be rendered immune to German bullets, which would turn to water ("maji" in Swahili) when fired. Like wildfire this movement spread among the discontented peoples and soon sparked African attacks on German administrative posts, settlers, and missionary stations. Over a wide area of central Tanganyika, Africans suddenly rose up in anger, determined to rid their lands of the hated German oppressors. At first the German armed forces were overwhelmed. African freedom fighters, terming themselves "askari ya mungu" (soldiers of God), cut telegraph lines, burned posts, destroyed roads and bridges, and besieged a number of German settlements. In the end, however, the Germans were too strong. They again resorted to a massive scorched-earth policy and pursued African troops relentlessly. Soon starvation was rampant, and group by group the Africans laid down their arms and surrendered. By 1908, when the rebellion finally ended, the death toll had reached between 75,000 and 125,000 (the German official report, probably conservative listed 75,000) men, women, and children. Thousands had been killed in battle or were executed by German troops, and tens of thousands died from starvation. By this time, the exhausted and beaten peoples of Tanganyika recognized the impossibility of further armed resistance, and the German conquest was complete.¹⁷

The history of African resistance to colonization and uprisings against established colonial rule proves that, unlike the assertions of many textbook authors, Africans did not need Western education to appreciate independence. Millions of Africans valued their independence, and thousands gave their lives in efforts to keep or to regain that independence once it was lost. This took place long before Africans were introduced to Western education and persisted throughout the colonial period often led by populations with no European education.

Because independence movements in Africa often were led by individuals who had attended Western schools (either in Africa or abroad), authors assume that the desire for independence was a product of a Western education. These Western educated Africans spoke the language of the colonizers and knew the types of political activities and organizations which the colonizers understood; therefore, they were in a better position to communicate with the colonizers in their efforts to gain the same independence which their fellow Africans without European education appreciated, desired and often sacrificed their lives for.

Basil Davidson notes:

Mass participation in anti-colonial struggles of one kind or another was a continuous feature of colonial life, but little of it owed anything to the influence of what was learned at school. The great revolts rested on their own traditions of political independence. The anti-colonial prophets, whether of African religion or separatist Christianity, founded their Messianic teachings upon ideas that lay outside the paternalist lessons of the schools.

It remains true that colonial education, or the means of achieving education overseas, was sometimes useful in providing small elites with a better understanding of the world they were in, and that some elites, notably in West Africa, played an influential and distinguished part in campaigning for the rights of Africans. Even so, such voices were few and far between. Most of the elites were content to accept the values of their masters."

IV. CLIMATE AND VEGETATION

In some general social studies books used in elementary schools, students often are introduced to Africa through units on "Hot and Wet Lands," or "Tropical Rain Forests." Such units usually focus on Sahara and the Zaire (Congo) River area. Since the purpose of such books usually is to give a general knowledge of the relationship between geography and life styles, the choice of these areas as examples of "hot and wet lands" and "deserts" is valid. But such units reinforce the prevalent misconception of students (learned from the mass media) that climatic conditions are uniform throughout Africa even though the rain forest covers only about ten percent of the continent. Allen Boyd and John Nickerson in their textbook *Tropical and Southern Africa* consider some American misconceptions about climate and vegetation in Africa. They comment:

HOW DO YOU MAKE a movie about Africa?

One way not to do it was the way it was done by one American camera crew in the years before World War II. At the time, Hollywood had just "discovered" the continent, and the producers sent a camera crew to do some filming on location. The team went to a spot near the Equator in Kenya, took its pictures, then sent the rushes home.

The spot looked likely enough on a map. But back in Hollywood, the producers were startled to find that the film showed only desert and scrubland. "Where's all the jungle?" the movie executives fumed. And so the camera crew had to travel a thousand miles from their original location to find a jungle that Hollywood considered "typically African."

The mix-up shows how incorrect some American attitudes are toward Africa. Like the Hollywood producers, many of us have fairly fuzzy notions of what is "typically African." Often enough, we have picked up these notions at our local movie theaters, watching Tarzan as he swings from a jungle tree or slogs through some soupy swamp. Such films have prompted us to mistake the Africa of a Hollywood studio for the Africa which really exists.

Actually, the real Africa is a lot more exciting than the Africa of our imaginings. As the world's second largest continent, Africa is far larger, far wider, and far more varied than anything that can be caught on a movie screen. Africa occupies a fifth of the earth's total land surface. Within its shores lie the world's longest river, (the Nile), the world's largest desert (the Sahara), and some of the most spectacular scenery to be found anywhere.

When units on "hot and wet lands" or "typical rain forests" are used, we suggest that teachers also include instruction on the more temperate savannah grasslands in order to give students a more accurate picture of climatic conditions and the diversity of life-styles in Africa. Grasslands and sparsely forested areas are the most common types of geographic areas, with yearly cycles of rainy and dry seasons.

V. WILD ANIMALS

Some textbooks emphasize wildlife in Africa either in the narratives or through pictures. American children, growing up in a culture that emphasizes and personalizes animals, find the topic interesting. But a discussion of wildlife in Africa raises problems which do not arise when young Americans think of animals in their own country. Most already hold a stereotype that the whole African continent is teeming with wild animals. This misconception is a result of exposure to such television series as "Wild Kingdom," "Animal World," "Daktari," to various Disney productions; to African wild animal specials from *National Geographic*, and various other wildlife-oriented publications. This in turn leads young people to think of Africans as poachers, guards, bearers, drivers—those African people depicted in the animal stories. Many young Americans, especially those with pets, have been taught to be sensitive and kind to animals. When this feeling is extended to wild animals, children tend

to think of Africans as insensitive and even cruel because they are frequently depicted as poachers in the wildlife films. There is a tendency to think of people as accessory to the animals, therefore to give priority to the welfare of the wildlife rather than to that of the people. The view of Africans as poachers who endanger the animals provides little understanding of human needs in poor-soil environments where there are large numbers of wild animals.

A common Western outlook on wildlife preservation in Africa reflects a desire to keep much of Africa as a game preserve in order to enable wealthy tourists to go on safari there. Furthermore, the stereotype that strongly associates Africa with wild animals is reinforced by the many Americans who go to Africa primarily to see animals. After tours in Kenya or South Africa, they return with pictures of animals and further reinforce the stereotype.

African visitors to the United States are invariably expected to be very familiar with wildlife, regardless of what part of Africa they come from. This happens even when they explain that they have always lived in urban areas. There is lack of knowledge that contact with wildlife is not a common experience for most Africans, and that even in areas famous for their wildlife, these animals are confined to game preserves and certain rural areas. Because of the keen American interest in animals, American students probably see more wild animals in zoos and in films than African young persons see under any circumstances. The American child therefore is likely to know more about wildlife than a young African. Textbooks and films which emphasize wild animals in Africa reinforce these problems.

VI. "TRIBES" AND "TRIBALISM"

In textbooks the term "tribe" frequently is used when such terms as "ethnic," "linguistic," or "regional" groups are more accurate. The term is used by authors to describe many diverse types of African societies—from small hunting and gathering bands to large kingdoms with highly organized social and political structures. Explanations that Africans live in tribes are found in many textbooks, while in fact the largest scale of social organization of many areas is the village with its headman or headwoman. The mistaken assumption that Africans "live in tribes" leads to the problem found in such statements as "When a new house is needed, everyone in the Kikuyu tribe helps to build it."²⁰ Such statements lead students to misunderstand the size and structure of various ethnic groups. There are over 1½ million Kikuyu and, of course, they do not unite together to build a house. The cooperative work described in this text must then refer to members of a village made up of Kikuyu-speaking people rather than the "Kikuyu tribe." The vast majority of Africans do not think of themselves as

members of a tribe, but rather as members of a lineage. "Tribal" identification among Africans is a relatively recent urban phenomenon and does not hold true at the village level. As Wiley and Wiley note:

... Clearly, Africans have not thought of themselves as "tribesmen." They only became "tribes" when outsiders applied that label.

Africans think of themselves as members of a lineage ...

Loyalty in such societies is first to one's kin, defined as all those uncles and aunts, cousins and second-cousins, and distantly related "brothers." The genius of these systems was to provide food and care for everyone—sick and crippled, young and aged, good farmers and bad—through their kinship ties to one another. As new forms of society have developed in the new nations of Africa, these laws and customs have changed; but even in their changed forms, they remain absolutely essential to preservation of village society ...

Throughout the twentieth century, African urban life has been unstable. Not only were disease, diet and housing conditions worse in town, but urban life was terribly insecure ... Alternate sources of security—lineage groups, religious organization, political parties, and other associations were formed in response ... The ties to the village were maintained as social insurance against disaster, loss of job, or injury to the male breadwinner ...

Since loyalty was primarily to one's kin or village instead of to the tribe, "tribal identification" emerged primarily in town where a man encountered crowds of people with different languages, customs, and beliefs. To deal with other groups, social categories or labels were utilized. These labels, usually denoted a man's home area or language, and became his "tribe." ...

... Thus, tribalization had developed, whereby men became proud of their home area and identified with other men who had similar language, home areas, and customs, even if they had not done so at home in the village.²¹

There also is the problem that groups of people who belong to the same ethnic group sometimes are wrongly identified as members of different "tribes." The role of "tribes" and "tribalism" in African politics often is also misunderstood and overemphasized in school texts. Economic interests, ideological differences, power struggles among individuals, and the role of national and international interest groups—all of which very often play a major part in politics—are neglected or not reviewed at all. This sometimes leads to oversimplified explanations of political problems and changes. The following excerpt involves such a misuse of the term "tribe." In this example, political problems resulting from class conflicts are identified as "tribal" conflict.

TRIBAL CONFLICT IN RWANDA AND BURUNDI

Another example of tribal conflict in Africa is the situation that exists in the two small East African nations of Rwanda and Burundi.

In Burundi, the Hutu tribe forms the majority of the population. But the Tutsi who are a minority, control the government. In 1972, the Tutsi-controlled government conducted nationwide massacres that resulted in the death of 50,000 to 100,000 Hutus. Many thousands of Hutu officials, civil servants, soldiers, teachers, students and others who might hold leadership positions were among those put to death. All were accused of treason and of plotting to exterminate the Tutsis. More than 150,000 Hutus have left Burundi and moved to neighboring countries. Thousands of them have gone to Rwanda, where Hutus control the government.

In Rwanda, Hutus are said to have killed more than 1,000 Tutsis between December 1972 and March, 1973. Tutsis have been fleeing their homes and more than 25,000 have come to Burundi in 1973. Between 1959 and 1962, 100,000 Tutsis left Rwanda when the Hutus took control of the government. It is believed that 20,000 Tutsis lost their lives at that time.

The Hutus, a Bantu people, came to this region many centuries ago from the southwest. They settled down and became farmers. About a thousand years ago, the Tutsis began drifting into the area from the north. The Tutsis are a Hamitic people—tall and slender, with sharp features like the people of Ethiopia and Somalir. The Tutsis were cattle raisers. The Tutsis established the practice known as "ubuhake"—an agreement whereby they provided the Hutus with cattle in exchange for the Hutus' services. This resulted in a feudal system under the Tutsis that lasted until modern times. When the Germans ruled the area and later the Belgians, both of these countries maintained Tutsi supremacy. The Tutsis believed that they were superior, and they treated the Hutus as inferiors.

Both the Hutus and Tutsis are intensely nationalistic. Each group greatly fears and distrusts the other. If they are to live together in peace they will have to overcome these fears and suspicions. Each will have to give up its dreams of dominating the other.²²

We would here like to quote the comments of Professors Bohannan and Curtin on this particular issue:

Still another usage (of the term tribe) has been applied in Rwanda and Burundi. There people called Tutsi constitute an aristocracy, while others called Hutu are the common people. Westerners often refer to the Tutsi and Hutu as separate "tribes," but in fact they speak the same language, share a common culture, and have a common historical tradition stretching back for centuries. In any other part of the world, these two groups would be identified as social classes. When the Hutu of Rwanda rose against the Tutsi aristocrats shortly after independence, the world press reported "tribal warfare," suggesting an atavistic throwback to non-rational animosities. In part, the revolt was a peasants' rebellion of a kind common enough in other parts of the world. Such confusion is one reason social scientists today rarely use "tribal" or "tribalism" without careful definition.²³

The terms "tribe" and "tribalism" often have negative connotations to the average American reader. The terms frequently connote uncontrolled, primitive,

dangerous and hostile, as reflected in a newspaper headline stating "Tribalism Tears Through the Heart of Africa."

This stereotype also may originate from the content of texts. A textbook statement such as "Many Africans still belong to tribes"²⁴ must create the impression that belonging to a tribe (i.e., a group that shares the same language and culture and originates from a common geographical area) is backward and negative.

People anywhere identify with others with whom they share a common language, culture, and geographical origin. But to the uninformed American young person "tribe" and "tribalism" appears to be peculiar to Africans and to a few other peoples such as the American Indians. These terms are not used in reference to peoples from Europe or their descendants in North America, nor are they commonly applied to certain Asian cultures. The use of the terms "tribe" and "tribalism" in reference to Africa and the effect of this on Africans themselves is discussed by Bohannan and Curtin:

Tribalism is used in Western analysis of African affairs, but not for other parts of the world, and Africans do identify their interests with those of other people who speak the same language, originate in the same rural communities, have a common culture, and often feel that they are united by ties of real or fictive kinship. But similar loyalties operate in American politics. Every politician knows that there is a Polish vote in Milwaukee, an Irish vote in Boston, a Jewish vote in New York, an Italian vote in San Francisco. Learning to adjust to ethnic politics of this kind is simply a part of the American political process, but these political patterns are not called "tribalism." Why are they so called in Africa?

... The term "tribe" became common in European writing about Africa only in the nineteenth century. In the era of the slave trade, Europeans usually talked about different African "nations," but the rise of European racism and cultural arrogance was accompanied by a shift to "tribe."

From that point onward, the term took on many special-purpose meanings. Anthropologists once used it simply to refer to any group whose culture the anthropologist identified as being homogeneous. In this sense, it was a classification applied from the outside, and the Africans themselves might not even be conscious of their "tribal" identity. The Ibo of eastern Nigeria, for example, had a common culture and a language made up of a number of mutually intelligible dialects. But they had no sense of identity as Ibo until the nineteenth century - no common state, no common history. Even the word "Ibo" originated in the New World as a classification of slaves who spoke the Ibo dialects. Iboland itself was divided into independent village-groups. They became conscious of their shared Iboness only in the colonial period when they came into contact with large numbers of people who were not Ibo. Thus, within a century between about 1850 and 1950, an identity first imposed from the outside as a cultural classification became a reality and ended as a major force in Nigerian politics.²⁵

VII. AFRICAN HEALTH CARE

Another frequently repeated error and bias has to do with African medicine men and health services. Here are examples of the statements found in textbooks:

"Each tribe has medicine men and witchdoctors . . . Africans have long depended on the tribal medicine men to cure their diseases with strange mixtures or with magic."²⁶

"Dependence on herbs to cure sickness and belief in witchdoctors and medicine men have cost the lives of untold numbers who could have been saved by modern drugs. Suspicion of western ideas causes many Africans to refuse vaccinations and other injections to ward off or cure disease."²⁷

Such statements show that their authors deprecate the African medicine man, the medicines he uses, and the people who use his services. The traditional doctor is often branded a "witchdoctor." The term "herbalist - psychologist" is a more accurate label, because the traditional African medicine man is basically a herbalist who also practices psychology with his patients. His role is very different from that of a witchfinder. In many social studies textbooks the medicines which the traditional African doctor uses are called "strange mixtures," but these are not stranger to the average person than tetracycline or the many other miracle drugs. Often it is indicated or implied that the African herbalist's and/or healer's treatments are ineffective. Of course some are, but so are some used in any modern hospital. It should be obvious that Africans would not have used the services of their healers and herbalists if experience through the ages had not proved them effective to some extent. The opinion of some authors that many Africans refuse vaccinations and other preventive injections is mistaken. With rare exceptions, when modern drugs and vaccinations are available, Africans are glad to benefit from them. The problem is that these are not available for all the people who want them. On this issue, Wiley and Wiley note:

Part of the mystique of African societies is their supposed reliance on magic. So pervasive is this stereotype that "voodoo" (a term rightly applied to a practice of magic in the Caribbean) is often used to create images of "black magic" in Africa. Actually, African societies are not so radically different from others in this regard. Cross-societal studies indicate that most societies hold some form of belief in magic. In the United States, for example, researchers have discovered that some airline pilots, steel workers, and others engaged in hazardous occupations carry rabbits' feet, charms, and other amulets for good luck and safety. Even today, there is widespread interest in astrology and horoscopes; and college chaplains have frequently reported a rise in chapel attendance just before final examinations. As Africans appeal to spirits of ancestors for guidance and a good harvest, Americans, too, pray for the health and safety of a close relative who is in danger. Magic and ritual are very much a part of both American and African life as a means of dealing with danger, death, and other fears.

Magic and ritual are common in Africa because life is so vulnerable and uncertain. With the world's highest birth and death rates, it is not surprising that some Africans invoke the supernatural to relieve anxiety. The local herbalist, who has been incorrectly called a witchdoctor, has a potion or an amulet, perhaps a magical stone, to allay a patient's fear of the future or to make that uncertainty more endurable. That small relief from fear and uncertainty may be enough support to help the individual take control of his world and his life.

In Central and Southern Africa, some universities are analyzing African medicines taken from bark, roots, herbs, seeds, and animal parts to discover their medical properties. Many of these herbs and potions undoubtedly help some patients by reducing bleeding, relieving headaches, or controlling nausea. Some can be harmful, especially to the chronically sick patient who needs a skilled doctor. But most of these medicines rarely induce serious side effects.

Most African people desire better health care than they can obtain from the herbalist or healer. Yet, with only one medical doctor for every twenty thousand to fifty thousand people, sick people will use whatever is available. They frequently know that the hospital or clinic with a Western-trained physician offers better health care. In fact, belief in Western medicine is so strong that in Zaire (the former Congo), a black market actually developed for stolen penicillin which villagers bought as the "magical" medicine to heal their sick.

Some African peoples believe that evil exists in a community through the presence of witches. Persons who harbor malicious or covetous thoughts about their neighbors are taught by their societies that such thoughts are so evil as to threaten the whole village or district. As a result, such persons may term themselves witches, and the headmen or villagers may employ a "witch-finder" to find the source of malice and hatred in their village. African peoples generally value individuals highly and seek to preserve social unity against the forces of malice, hatred, greed, hoarding, or coveting. As a consequence, there is a need to discover and to heal anyone who harbors such feelings. But most African societies have never resorted to the technique of the New England and European communities who tortured and burned witches. Instead, there are elaborate ceremonies to discover the witch and to dispel the evil in a complex ritual. The individual possessed by a witch is cleansed with herbs, water and the laying-on of hands. The final goal is the restoration of the newly cleansed person to his or her rightful place in the family, the village, the clan, and the lineage group.²⁸

For an accurate understanding of American health care one should not focus on TV drug commercials; on the common use of astrology and horoscopes; or on the huge U.S. market for health fads (vitamin pills, special diets, miracle foods, etc.), even though all are widespread. So also, one should not focus on the magical aspects of the services of the herbalist-psychologists of Africa.

An important classroom resource to assist students to understand foreign cultures and their medical practices is Horace Miner's article, "Body Ritual Among

the Nacirema" (American spelled backwards). It sensitizes students to the role of language used in describing "alien" cultures and therefore to African cultures, particularly to the roles of medicine men, their medicines, and the people who use their services. One such extract deals with American concern for dental health:

In the hierarchy of magical practitioners, and below the medicine men in prestige, are specialists whose designation is best translated "holy-mouth-men". The Nacirema have an almost pathological horror of and fascination with the mouth, the condition of which is believed to have a supernatural influence on all social relationships. Were it not for the rituals of the mouth, they believe that their teeth would fall out, their gums bleed, their jaws shrink, their friends desert them, and their lovers reject them. They also believe that a strong relationship exists between oral and moral characteristics. For example, there is a ritual ablution of the mouth for children which is supposed to improve their moral fiber.

The daily body ritual performed by everyone includes a mouth-rite. Despite the fact that these people are so punctilious about care of the mouth, this rite involves a practice which strikes the uninitiated stranger as revolting. It was reported to me that the ritual consists of inserting a small bundle of hog hairs into the mouth, along with certain magical powders, and then moving the bundle in a highly formalized series of gestures.

In addition to the private mouth-rite, the people seek out a holy-mouth-man once or twice a year. These practitioners have an impressive set of paraphernalia, consisting of a variety of augers, awls, probes, and prods. The use of these objects in the exorcism of the evils of the mouth involves almost unbelievable ritual torture of the client. The holy-mouth-man opens the client's mouth and, using the above mentioned tools, enlarges any holes which decay may have created in the teeth. Magical materials are put into these holes. If there are no naturally occurring holes in the teeth, large sections of one or more teeth are gouged out so that the supernatural substance can be applied. In the client's view, the purpose of these ministrations is to arrest decay and to draw friends. The extremely sacred and traditional character of the rite is evident in the fact that the natives return to the holy-mouth-man year after year, despite the fact that their teeth continue to decay.

It is to be hoped that, when a thorough study of the Nacirema is made, there will be careful inquiry into the personality structure of these people. One has but to watch the gleam in the eye of a holy-mouth-man, as he jabs an awl into an exposed nerve, to suspect that a certain amount of sadism is involved. If this can be established, a very interesting pattern emerges, for most of the population shows definite masochistic tendencies.²⁹

"Body Ritual Among the Nacirema" also deals with daily cleanliness routines of Americans, bathrooms in American homes, hospitals, the services of nurses and psychiatrists and other topics in a similar fashion. It helps students understand the possible shortcomings of writings about foreign cultures and health practices. In the following paragraph Miner describes psychiatrists, their services and their patients:

There remains one other kind of practitioner, known as a "listener". This witch-doctor has the power to exorcise the devils that lodge in the heads of people who have been bewitched. The Nacirema believe that parents bewitch their own children. Mothers are particularly suspected of putting a curse on children while teaching them the secret body rituals. The counter-magic of the witch-doctor is unusual in its lack of ritual. The patient simply tells the "listener" all his troubles and fears, beginning with the earliest difficulties he can remember. The memory displayed by the Nacirema in the exorcism sessions is truly remarkable. It is not uncommon for the patient to bemoan the rejection he felt upon being weaned as a babe, and a few individuals even see their troubles going back to the traumatic effects of their own birth.³⁰

After an amusing and educationally very useful discussion of various American practices, the following is given as a conclusion:

Our review of the ritual life of the Nacirema has certainly shown them to be a magic-ridden people. It is hard to understand how they have managed to exist so long under the burdens which they have imposed upon themselves.³¹

Interestingly, American students who read about the Nacirema and do not know that the word is American spelled backwards, frequently guess that these people live in Africa or Southeast Asia.

VIII. MARRIAGE CUSTOMS AND BRIDEWEALTH

When explaining marriage customs in Africa, many texts only consider the question of bridewealth or "bride price." These customs in Africa vary from place to place and have been greatly affected by urbanization. Other and more meaningful and relevant customs related to marriage should be included to give a more correct understanding of the values of different African societies, and to set the question of bridewealth in a broader context of marriage customs.

Another problem is that many textbooks refer to bridewealth as "bride price" and define it as payment to the bride's parents in return for the loss of the services of their daughter (as in *Our World and Its People* and in *Sources of Identity*).³² Although this may be the functional essence of the custom in certain places, it cannot be generalized about all of Africa. It is too economic an interpretation of bridewealth customs. There is an apparent fascination with this practice because of the general misconception that the groom is "buying" his bride. Sometimes African visitors here are asked how much their husbands paid for them before they were married. The following excerpt presents this western misconception as a reality of African life in a discussion of the value of cattle among the Kikuyu of Kenya. " . . . The Kikuyu did not like to use their cows and goats for food. They used the animals almost the way we use money. A Kikuyu man could buy land and pay for it with some of his animals. He could even buy a wife with a certain number of goats or cows!"³³

Such statements belittle Africans and their values and either create or reinforce misconceptions which make it difficult for students to develop an appreciation of African values. The African custom of bridewealth usually is used by parents of both bride and groom to insure parental respect and consent in the choice of a spouse. A girl's parents would ask for a higher amount of bridewealth from a suitor if they do not wish their daughter to marry that particular suitor. On the other hand, if the parents of a son want to discourage him from marrying a certain girl, they can either refuse to pay the bridewealth or can make too small an offer to make it acceptable to the girl's parents. In this way the custom gives parents a certain amount of control over their children's choice of a partner. This factor is more important than economic considerations underlying the various customs of bridewealth.

In some African urban areas, poorer families with an educated daughter will, in fact, seek a large bridewealth as a means of accumulating cash. However, in spite of this materialism, the daughter has not been sold; rather, the custom was used to achieve more money. In fact, such educated daughters have more freedom in the choice of husbands, even though bridewealth customs continue to be practiced.

Basic to most African marriages is the idea that it is not just a matter of a woman marrying a man; rather, it is the association and linkage of two entire families and lineages. This is not well understood in America, where so much emphasis is put on individual choice and the nuclear family.

African peoples would fail to understand American marriage customs if the focus were on the supernatural and magical aspects of American marriage practices (something old, something new; asking God to bless the union, etc.). In the same way, focusing on one aspect of the marriage practices among Africans does not promote a genuine understanding of African marriage customs, varied as they are from place to place.

Other marriage customs practiced in Africa include the payment of a dowry by the girl's parents, contributions by parents of both bride and groom to the newlyweds so they can establish their own home, and still others in which no financial agreements are made beforehand.

The great variety of non-economic practices in marriage customs should be included in instruction also. There are African societies where girls usually are married when they are 11 or 12 years old and others where the average age of marriage is over 20. In some societies parents decide whom their daughter marries without consulting her. In others, the girl and her husband-to-be make their own choices and decisions. Some societies practice polygamy and others monogamy, although polygamy is becoming increasingly uncommon especially in urban areas. Some societies have taboos against intermarriage with families who make their living in certain types of occupations - such as those of goldsmiths, silversmiths, leather

workers, etc. The various African customs related to marriage are too numerous to cover in this paper. We have only mentioned a few to show that explanations of "bridewealth" to the exclusion of all other practices creates an overgeneralized and lopsided misunderstanding of African values.

The following extract from a textbook gives a more accurate and relevant explanation of African marriage customs:

Family and extended family are the center of African life, and it is marriage and children that see that it continues. Marriages are not just the union of two people. They are the uniting of two families, the creating of bonds between two villages. Marriage is not totally separated from what we call romantic love, but such love is never seen as the foundation for marriage. Marriage is too serious a matter, and too far-reaching a one to be left entirely to two young people. There are certain considerations. For one thing, no man or woman may marry anyone related to him or her in the same line as far back as five generations . . .

Generally, marriages are arranged. A man may see a good friend's pregnant wife in the marketplace, and ask her politely if his son may marry her child, should it be a girl. Flattered and pleased, the prospective father may agree to the match, with equal politeness. In the Sudan and Kenya, Nuer and Kikuyu youth may themselves make the first move. When a boy sees a girl he likes, he visits her, talks with her whenever he can, assures himself that she likes him too, and then invites the families to make the plans.

Once a marriage is made, it is sealed and celebrated with a bride token. In Europe, a girl was expected to take a dowry or gift to her husband; in Africa the bridegroom and his relatives offer gifts to the bride's family. A bride token is not a single extravagant gift, marking the day of the marriage; it is the token of a long-lasting relationship, the marriage; the mark of a new concern between families. The Upper Volta Mossi engage in a long series of gifts and services. The final and greatest gift is the bride herself, and the children she will bear. The gift-giving is a long, ceremonious process. First, the Mossi must like the prospective bridegroom. They must like his character and consider him a friend. Once he is accepted as a friend, the two families begin to feast together, and help each other in work . . .

The announcement of a coming marriage by African families marks the start of handing over the bride token, or the exchange of gifts. Amor Nkundu of Zaire, through the marriage broker *ndanga*, the future husband first presents the *ikula*: a white, two copper rings, or an arrow. If the woman and her kin accept the *ikula*, the betrothal is official. If the family refuses but the young woman agrees, she may run off with the man and wait with him until her family agrees. But when all are agreed and the *ikula* is accepted, the marriage, or tradition of the bride, may take place. Many gifts are given at the marriage, each one having a meaning beyond its use. The *ndanga* is offered to the bride's father: a large knife, followed by five to ten copper bracelets; it is a sign that the husband is now responsible for accidents that might befall the woman."

The authors continue to explain the different kinds of gifts exchanged and their symbolic values. Then

they provide the following kind of refreshing information which deals with more than bridewealth in explaining marriage customs in Africa:

But the bride is leaving her family, and so no marriage is without sadness. Her family cannot hide their grief; they can only make it a part of the ceremony, and thus ease it. In Botswana, on the day set for the marriage, the young men of the bridegroom's family drive the cattle to be given as the bride token to the bride's home. As they draw near, the women of the bride's party gather in front of the entrance to the corral. The men try to drive the cattle into the corral; the women run toward them fiercely, shouting, waving sticks, and driving the cattle across the field. The men chase after the cattle, and gather them once more; the women, with new force, drive them away. At last their protests fade, and, reluctantly, they allow the men to drive the animals into the corral, then allowing the groom to take the bride away. The bride's going has been accepted by them, and the marriage will take place. And still, even after the marriage, all is not settled. The bride must be feasted and feted and persuaded by her new family's kindness to remain with them. The Jie people of Uganda sing and dance for the bride, and still she often returns to her mother's home, having to be drawn back again, enticed into settling down as a wife . . .

. . . Wives must be diplomatic with their husband's parents. Sometimes, living in the same house as her father-in-law, a woman avoids speaking to him directly at any time. She is dependent upon her husband, and that makes her twice as dependent upon her husband's father. If she is ill-treated by her husband, she often complains to his uncle or his brothers, but her real and deep bond to her husband's family is through her children. In some homes she is called only "child's mother."³⁵

IX. PROBLEMS IN THE STUDY OF AFRICA'S PEOPLE

In presenting the people of Africa, many textbooks are subject to the following problems:

(a) *Emphasis in the narrative and in the choice of photographs of numerically small groups of people rather than on larger, more representative groups.*³⁶ Other authors describe these groups as "important," but fail to give any reason for their importance in African studies.

There are three important smaller Negro groups in sub-Saharan Africa. The Pygmies, averaging about 4½ feet tall are found mainly in the rain forest of the Congo Basin. They live by hunting wild game. The Bushmen live in the Kalahari Desert in Southwest Africa. They hunt and gather food for a living. The Hottentots live on reservations in Southwest Africa . . .³⁷

These groups which frequently are emphasized in textbooks are the Mbuti, San and Khoi peoples. The total population of these three groups is estimated between 25 and 250 thousand people, which is approximately .007 to .7 percent of the total population of Africa (over 350 million). It is difficult to defend spending any significant amount of time on such a

minute percentage of the African population, especially when this means that other larger and more significant groups are not surveyed. The names chosen to describe these people - "Bushmen", "Pygmies" and "Hottentots" - are not the names which are used by the people themselves; rather, they are deprecating and unflattering terms given to them by Europeans who for many reasons did not learn or use the appropriate names. "Pygmy" comes from a Greek word meaning short or dwarf. The name "Bushmen" was given to the San people by South African whites who exterminated many of them and drove others from their fertile lands into the desert bush areas; hence the term "Bushmen." Many young Americans came to believe that many or most African people live like these exotic, small atypical groups because so much of the curriculum is devoted to their study. Films, such as *The Hunters* or *Bushmen of the Kalahari*, frequently reinforce the images. The usual four to nine week unit of study on Africa in most schools is not sufficient time to study even most of the larger ethnic or national groups. This leaves no time for very small groups whose life-styles are atypical and unrepresentative of more common life-styles of most of the peoples of Africa.

(b) *Emphasis on what appears to Westerners as "exotic" or "weird" in youthful parlance.* Very often descriptions of the peoples discussed in problem (a) reflect attitudes of treating them as objects of curiosity and fascination rather than as fellow human beings. Because their life styles and customs are different from Western ones, the authors and readers frequently fail to project a common humanity. Emphasis of small atypical groups, choice of pictures of exotic and unusual cosmetics, dress, jewelry and scarification reinforce these curiosities. Such discussions and explanations displace relevant content and a more accurate understanding of African peoples and cultures. They are likely either to minimize or prevent an insight into the basic human characteristics held in common by Westerners and various peoples of Africa.

The appreciation of unique African culture and design in textiles, body scarification, and other art forms is an important basis of understanding cultural diversity. However, the prior and more important need is to establish the common humanity of Western and African peoples. The background of negative stereotypes in the media and beliefs of many Westerners predisposes them to conceptualize African crafts and art as symbols of "the primitive," especially since they are associated with different or less clothing than Westerners use, with alien dance and music, and with the other hallmarks of "Primitive Man." Therefore, a priority is placed in our proposals for indicating first the symbols of common situation, common need, and common aspiration of African and Western peoples. American school children need to see African cities, African school children in schools, African bureaucrats in shirts and ties, African computer operators, taxi drivers, policemen, politicians, etc. Then they

should proceed to an appreciation of the cultural heritage of African peoples which is unique to their societies, but which frequently is no longer from the mainstream of the contemporary culture and concerns of many African Peoples. In addition to studies of rural peoples, we recommend teaching about the uniqueness of African cultures after creating an understanding of our common humanity and common aspirations.

Some, but not many, textbooks also commit the error of referring to the black people in South Africa as "Kaffirs."³⁸ This is a word that racially biased white South Africans coined in reference to the black people in the country. It is equivalent to the term "nigger" and should have no place in textbooks.

(c) *Irrelevant information about "race."* In explaining the types of races found in Africa, some textbooks give details that are not of substantial educational value to elementary and high school students and are likely to confuse them. In some texts black Africans are classified or described as "true" or Sudanese Negroes, Nilotes, Hamites, Cushites, Negrillos, Bantus, etc.³⁹ Such terms are only words of classification debated among anthropologists and linguists. They are without real meaning to readers who are not specialists in anthropology and ethnology.

Such confusing detail should be avoided at the pre-collegiate level. If the question of racial divisions in Africa arises, the peoples may be described as predominantly black, with some lighter skinned peoples in the north and some white settlers predominantly in the south. Giving less attention to this question frees up valuable time for the study of other more relevant topics.

X. THE SOUTH AFRICAN QUESTION

Inaccurate information, biases and misinterpretations about the apartheid policy and its effects in the Republic of South Africa often are found in textbooks. This is partly because South African government propaganda material misinforms and influences various authors. The South African government, in its efforts to either justify its policy of apartheid or to make it appear less evil than it is, spends considerable amounts of money for magazines, booklets, films and filmstrips, which are distributed at low cost or free of charge to educators in the United States. These materials often are found in school libraries and instructional material centers. "Mosaic of Progress: South Africa Today" is the title of the most recent kit, containing a filmstrip, cassette, teaching notes, and poster. It was produced for the Information Service of South Africa and is distributed by them. It presents the white government's policy of separate development as a positive step in solving the problems of black/white relations in South Africa. These materials can be used by skillful teachers and students who understand the purposes for which they are produced and who have access to data and other teaching

materials representing the points of view of the African people, the liberation movements, the United Nations, etc.

It is impossible to point out all of the distortions found in American texts on the South African question in this brief paper. Therefore we shall give only a few examples:

a. Many texts emphasize white history, chronicling the British-Boer Wars, the Great Trek, the Afrikaner/English conflicts, and give little or no information about the history of the African people. One seldom reads, for example, that the Khoisan peoples (so-called "Bushmen") were hunted for sport by the early settlers near the Cape, or about the long wars of resistance fought by the Africans against white encroachment on their lands.⁴⁰ Dwelling on white history not only fails to tell the Africans' story, but it reinforces the white South Africans' false claim that the land was uninhabited by blacks when the white settlers arrived in the seventeenth century. This is historically not true, and yet is commonly accepted by uninformed teachers and students.

b. Some textbooks include statements taken uncritically from South African government propaganda material. The following is an example of such a statement:

Despite the fact that all South Africans - whites, Asians, Coloreds and Africans - are required to carry the pass or 'reference' book, the Africans regard it as the most hated part of the apartheid system.⁴¹

This statement is misleading, because while the pass law in theory applies to all, in practice whites are not required to carry their passes. The Republic of South Africa has the highest rate of arrest in the world, and most arrests are based on violations of "pass" laws as applied to blacks. The apartheid system, enforced by use of the pass system, separates Africans from their families and forces them out of towns and cities when their services are not required by white employers. To say that it is the most hated part of the apartheid system implies that Africans object to the carrying of the passbooks as an inconvenience rather than as a symbol of the entire repressive system.

c. Another common falsehood is that South African blacks enjoy a higher standard of living than other Africans on the continent.

Outside of Johannesburg proper, but within the city's metropolitan area, there is a population of over 1,500,000 skilled and unskilled South African Negro laborers. Negro people in South Africa are called Bantus. These laborers live in suburbs or compounds, south and west of Johannesburg. While their standard of living is high when compared to native Africans elsewhere on the continent of Africa, these laborers are subject to the official South African policy of apartheid.⁴²

... the per capita income of Europeans in Southern Africa is roughly comparable to that of Western Europe. On the other hand, non-Europeans have a standard of living

that while generally higher than that found in other parts of Africa - is far below the level achieved by Europeans.⁴³

A very quick look at the statistics on wage rates, death rates, and health care reveals quite a different story. Because of malnutrition and disease, the chances of a child surviving to age five in some African reserves is no better than 50/50. In South Africa there is one doctor for every 450 white people and one for every 18,000 blacks. The Johannesburg Chamber of Commerce estimated that an African family of five living in Soweto (one of the "model" African townships outside of Johannesburg which was the scene of one of the many black uprisings in the summer of 1976) requires a minimum of Rand 82.19 (\$115.00) a month to live. However, a survey by the South Africa Productivity and Wage Association in 1972 indicated that more than 80 percent of Africans employed in the private sector (excluding mining) earned less than Rand 70 (\$98) per month. In the survey, the return rate among firms was only 13 percent and it is likely that those responding paid higher wages than those firms not responding.

The following shows income and employment of blacks and whites in South Africa.

Average Monthly Household Income, 1975:

\$ 83.95 African	\$711.85 White
\$243.80 Coloured	\$366.85 Indian

African Income vs. Poverty Level:

The Household Subsistence Level is estimated to be the amount needed to provide basic necessities for an African family of six. It makes no provision for taxes, medical care, education or savings.

—In April, 1977, the HSL for an urban African family was calculated at \$150 a month. At that time, average African pay in the retail trade was \$94.30; in manufacturing \$162.15.—*FM* 5/2/77

—In 1975, with the poverty line set at \$127.65, a study showed that 63.5% of African households had monthly incomes of less than \$92.—*FM* 11/19/76

Unemployment:

African unemployment was generally estimated at over one million in mid-1977.—*U. of Pretoria and other sources*. Non-African unemployment stood at 22,000 as of February, 1977.—*SA Reserve Bank*

Sources:

FM: *Financial Mail*, South African Financial Journal

SA Reserve Bank: *South African Reserve Bank Quarterly Bulletin*, March 1977

X Ray: *X Ray*, publication of The American Bureau, Britain

Given the great wealth of South Africa, Africans there could enjoy the highest standard of living in Africa if that wealth were distributed equitably among the people. Of course, it is not. Miners in Zambia, for example, are paid wages much higher than miners in South Africa. Other comparable jobs in manufacturing and services are more highly paid in independent black-ruled African countries where labor is respected and is allowed to unionize. South African miners may

earn more than common laborers or farm laborers in other African countries, but these are not parallel. One cannot compare industrial workers from one country with subsistence farmers from another. If the subsistence farmers of Ghana, for example, were compared with the subsistence farmers in black "homelands" in South Africa, the frequent boasts of South African propaganda would not prevail.

d. Some textbooks provide charts or statistics on South Africa which are misleading.⁴⁴ Any data given about South Africa which do not distinguish by race (such as per capita income, number of cars, telephones or hospital beds per person, or life expectancy) are misleading. The color factor is so important that any statistics must be carefully distinguished among the four recognized South African groups: white, coloured, Asian, and black.

e. Although white South African sources are frequently used or paraphrased, it is nearly impossible to find references to viewpoints of the Africans involved in the long struggle for liberation in South Africa. These materials are available from the resource centers in Wisconsin and Michigan and can be obtained from many literature distribution centers throughout North America. Comparable materials from Mozambique and Angola can help students to understand the goals of those people who have won their independence from colonial rule under the Portuguese. Many of their objectives are similar to parallel liberation movements in South Africa and Rhodesia/Zimbabwe.

* It is impossible to enumerate all the problems found in textbooks on the controversial question of the Republic of South Africa. Teachers can identify the shortcomings of their texts on the South African issue by familiarizing themselves with the social, economic and political realities of that country. There is an abundance of literature on this topic, and we recommend a few that give a comprehensive picture. (See recommended readings.)

XI. EMPHASIZING CONFLICTS AND POLITICAL INSTABILITY

In writing about independent black states in Africa, some texts tend to emphasize problems of instability such as the political upheaval in Zaire (the former Congo) in the early 1960's and the 1967-70 civil war in Nigeria. This choice of emphasis often influences students' impressions of the continent and leads them to think of Africa as generally unpredictable, dangerous, and tumultuous. Several textbooks are subject to this shortcoming; however, we shall use only two to clarify this issue. One high school textbook devotes ten pages to Africa South of the Sahara since the period of independence.⁴⁵ One-third of this material concerns "Civil War in Nigeria," "Tribal Conflict in Rwanda and Burundi," and "Uganda in Turmoil." Under a sub-heading "Politics in Sub-Saharan Africa" no mention is made of any positive achievements, and two-thirds of the narrative deals with Uganda's social, political,

and economic problems under General Amin. A further bias is reflected when a stronger negative opinion is expressed against Amin's policy towards the Indians expelled from Uganda than against the much more inhumane, larger scale, and more violent policies of the white minority South African government toward its 18 million black citizens. The fascination of the West with the brutalities and idiosyncrasies of the Amin regime - a fascination on which the Western press has thrived for years - reflects and reinforces biases and stereotypes held about Africa generally: inability of Africans to govern themselves; instability of African governments; and "uncivilized", "primitive" practices of African people. This emphasis - in textbooks as well as in the press - fails to add to the student's understanding and appreciation of the strengths and achievements of African nations.

These texts and the press fail to report the less newsworthy, unsensational stories of Julius Nyerere of Tanzania or Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia who have been in power since independence and who have worked steadily to build schools, clinics, hospitals, roads, etc., to meet the needs of their people. One can expect that the press would fall prey to sensationalism; one would hope that publishers of educational materials would not.

Another secondary text devotes about eight pages to Africa South of the Sahara since the period of independence.⁴⁸ Almost half of this deals with the political problems of the ex-Congo in the early 1960's and the Nigerian civil war of the late 1960's. The author uses more than a page to explain the shortcomings of Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and to contrast Ghana's road to independence with that of Rhodesia. Ghana and Rhodesia are described as having taken different roads to independence. Of Ghana under Nkrumah, students are taught that "... it became debt-ridden instead of prosperous ... and its democratic beginning was twisted into a dictatorship."⁴⁹ No mention is made of the international political situation which contributed heavily to the fall of Nkrumah. Whites in Rhodesia, the author says, "sought to copy the practice of the Union of South Africa: that of keeping the black population forever out of government and as second class citizens."⁵⁰ Britain's economic sanctions against Rhodesia and the announcement of the trade blockade by the General Assembly of the United Nations are explained. There follows a statement, "However, sanctions did not bring Rhodesia to its knees."⁵¹ After such contrasts between Ghana and Rhodesia, the author gives the following opinion:

So as Ghana struggles to prove that blacks can rule wisely and well, Rhodesia is striving to prove that white supremacy is the only way for Africa to succeed. What the outcome will be in this study of contrasts is significant not only for Ghana and Rhodesia but for every other country of Africa as well.⁵²

This statement implies that these two governments are following their respective paths in order to prove that one or the other system is superior. This is not the

issue. The ruling authorities in Ghana struggle to provide better conditions for Ghanaians and *not* "to prove that blacks can rule wisely and well." To infer that blacks need to prove that they can govern themselves has strong racial overtones.

One implication which could be drawn from the author's argument is that if white Rhodesians manage to continue to withstand the pressure for majority rule, both from within Rhodesia and from without, then they will have set an example as a prosperous, strong and stable government in contrast to that of Ghana. This analysis assumes the possibility of the continuation of white supremacist governments in Southern Africa and therefore lacks an understanding of events in the area.

Another issue with similar implications is found in the many textbooks with statements such as the following:

Africa South of the Sahara exhibited the problems of newly independent states perhaps better than any other region. Independence came very rapidly. Indeed, many people believed that it came before the people were ready. But ready or not Africans demanded *uhuru* - freedom - and they got it.⁵³

or:

Unprepared to exercise the responsibilities of independence, the Congo with a long-oppressed population was immediately plunged into violence. Discord flared among those who wanted a highly centralized government, those who wanted considerable self-government for the provinces, and those who wanted primarily to protect Belgian economic interests. Congolese troops revolted against their Belgian officers. Rioting and looting broke out and whites were attacked. Thousands of Belgians prepared to flee. Then eleven days after independence, Katanga province seceded and formed its own government. It was a rich mining area, the wealthiest province of the Congo, and a stronghold of Belgian influence. It called on Belgium for assistance and Belgium ordered its troops in the Congo to protect Katanga, the Kasai province, and Belgian citizens.⁵⁴

or:

The headlong rush into freedom created many difficulties. Most nations in tropical Africa were not prepared for independence. None of the new African states had any strong traditions of political unity, for loyalty was mainly centered in each tribe. Other than French or English, there was no common language. The continent was diverse and complex, with more than fifty territories and more than eight hundred different languages. The population growth outstripped the food supply, while farm methods remained inefficient. Natural resources were plentiful, but a lack of industry prevented their exploitation. Although the majority of the new nations began crash programs of economic development, they lacked finances.⁵⁵

In these texts, as in many others, students are taught that Africans became independent too soon for their own good. This reflects the still-prevalent colonial view which asserts "the white man's burden" of

civilizing the non-white world. By implication students are taught that Europeans were not given enough time to carry out their "civilizing missions" and that it would have been desirable if colonial rule had lasted longer in Africa. The often repeated statement that Africans were not ready for independence and self-government fails to take into account the fact that African societies had existed as self-governing and independent for centuries before the arrival of the Europeans. Of course, when independence was regained, the organization and size of units of government were larger than most Africans had experienced during the pre-colonial period. A closer look into the history of Africa reveals that the colonial powers had no intention of giving meaningful training in operating and controlling a modern state. Their interests were to dominate Africans and thereby to profit from the wealth of Africa. We have already commented on the lack of quality education under the colonial masters. Most of the problems mentioned as the result of lack of preparation for independence and self-government would have developed irrespective of the governing abilities of Africans. Problems such as the lack of industry and lack of a common language most probably would have been of similar gravity even if the "headlong rush into freedom" had been postponed until after another century of colonial rule, because these were not priorities of colonial administrations in Africa. Having different political preferences for more centralized or more decentralized governments does not mean, for example, that the Congo was not ready for the responsibilities of independence, but rather reflects the existence of different political views among different interest groups, a condition which is prevalent throughout the world. Regionalism is strong in Ireland, in the United States, and in the U.S.S.R. Surely we wouldn't advocate that a colonial power should have governed these nations until they overcame their regionalism!

The part played by Belgian economic interests in the early years of Congo's independence shows the continued influence of former colonial economic interests on the politics of an independent country. Vengeance taken against these symbols of white oppression such as looting of stores is not a sign of being unfit for independence, but of anger, frustration and opportunism of individuals in a chaotic situation. What in Western societies would be explained as different political and economic interests, problems, and power struggles among individuals and interest groups is in the African case described as Africans not "being ready" for independence.

Finally, a focus on the "insufficient preparation of Africans for independence" fails to teach the actual reasons for political upheaval and coups in African politics - failure of most African nations to achieve an adequate and equitable return on their commodity sales on the world market, the failure to maximize production, the inflationary spiral of manufactured goods on the world market which African nations

must purchase, the rapidly rising aspirations of ordinary African peoples for improved standards of living, and the resultant frustration and anger from hopes not fulfilled.

XII. CLASSICAL OR TRADITIONAL AFRICAN RELIGIONS

Another topic frequently misunderstood and wrongly interpreted in textbooks is traditional African religions. Islam and Christianity are indigenous to Africa in the sense that they have been accepted and practiced in various parts of the continent for many centuries. But the issue here focuses on other faiths often described as traditional African religions.

One common error in describing these world views is to label some African religions as a form of "animism." In fact, there are many religions having in common an element of immanent spirits in nature. The use of the term "animism" leads to a wrong belief that Africans worship objects or natural phenomena. The objects or natural phenomena involved in the practices of these traditional beliefs are not worshipped. They are recognized as distinct from the spirits which reside in them. Some high school texts assert that as more and more Africans become "educated" (meaning in the Western sense), the number of adherents of these faiths will decline. First, there is no proof that education replaces belief in classical African world views, just as education does not preclude belief in non-scientific world views anywhere.

As Western airline pilots carry rabbits feet and charms in their uncertain occupation, so various African peoples can combine complex technical and scientific work with various "traditional" world views. Second, a genuine understanding of the basic tenets of traditional African religions makes the desirability of their decline questionable. As one Western scholar notes:

We have much of great value to learn from the African. For example, only recently in the post-modern scientific era have we become aware of the matter-energy-life-mind-spirit continuum as a proposition of empirical science, while to the Bantu this has long been a part of his life experience. For him, all reality - animate, inanimate, and post-animate - represents different states of the same energy, with God the transcendent-immanent, all-powerful One who creates, regulates, permeates, harmonizes and supports all other forces in the universe, and yet as absolute Power is beyond them. God as Power is accorded personality and the whole universe is personal by analogy: a universe alive with personal forces. God is the ultimate Person, but people, like God, are forces that interact rather than beings that coexist. From this view springs the sense of Bantu community, a community of interrelationship of forces of persons and thoughts, animals and things, God and forefathers: a sense of community which we in ignorance call "tribalism". . .

Such a world-view was once incorrectly labeled "animism" by hasty observers, and the term is still commonly

used in describing African traditional religious experience. Now we must modify our attitude from one of condescension to appreciation for the Bantu's early perception of that which we are just now ourselves apprehending. . .

In recognizing that as Christians our own world-view must presently correspond with the findings of science yet maintain the biblical perspective, we may discover in the Bantu philosophy a treasury of insights that could, when assimilated, enable Christianity and science to converge more closely on fundamental issues.⁵⁴

Another problem with textbook explanations of these religions is the assertion that they involve ancestor worship. Adherents of these faiths do not worship their ancestors. They venerate their ancestors and approach deities through ancestors as intermediaries.

These errors and others are found in the following sample statements from high school social studies textbooks:

It is the religion of more than 100 million Africans - a religion called animism (AN-uh-mizm). A person who believes in animism believes that anything created by God - things, animals, plants, air - has a soul. This soul can be spoken to, pleased, or insulted by man. So when someone cuts a tree, he must first make an offering to it so that it will not harm him. A man will always try to get nature on his side . . .

Although Grandfather was no longer in sight, he might come at any time in the form of a bird or a snake. He may even show his anger by banging on the door. In one part of Africa, girls were told never to pour boiling water out of a bucket. It might burn some spirit passing by. One can never be sure what an ancestor might do! _____
What other peoples worship their ancestors? . . .

And animists believed in many gods, like a god of rain, a god of wind, an earth goddess, a thunder god, and a god of harvest. And all of these gods could be influenced by one's ancestors. Almost nothing happened by accident. There was a spirit or god behind everything - too much rain, not enough rain, a good harvest or a poor harvest, disease, death - an animist would say that some ancestor or god was either pleased or angry. And so animism became more than just a religion. It was a whole way of life. There were many customs and ceremonies . . .

Early Africans did not ask for explanations of the things that happened around them. They had their spirits, their gods, and their witch doctors. And animism was strong. But today, more and more young Africans are being educated. They have many questions which animism cannot answer.⁵⁵

Another author writes in the same vein:

The tribal religions have certain basic elements in common: (1) the world was created by a single god; (2) spirits are worshipped. Spirit worship includes both the spirits of the ancestors of the family tribe, and such objects as a statue, or a rock, or a stack of wood. These are regarded as the ancestral spirit itself . . .

In dances and songs the spirits are asked to protect the members of the tribe. Good spirits bring good crops and keep disease and other disasters away from the tribe. The

medicine man - who is quite different from the movie version - is an influential person. He is both priest and doctor; he predicts the future, supplies charms as protection against the enemy; he tells how to cure sickness, and bring rain . . .

The white man brought many changes. The African himself began to see that science is more powerful than the witch doctor. The powers of magic are giving way as social customs change under the influence of education and Western ideas. The chief's son or the witch doctor's son has gone to Western schools and come home with modern scientific explanations of so-called magic.⁵⁶

Professor Bolaji Idowu, the Nigerian scholar, addresses some of the issues raised in these quotations:

It is a fact that the African world swarms with spirits which, according to African beliefs, are distinct from material objects, although they reside in material objects or express themselves through material objects. Sacred animals, sacred trees, sacred stones, sacred rivers and sacred spots, abound in Africa. We must, however, be careful at this point. Certain sacred objects are only symbols or emblems and no more than that. There is no doubt but that the element of the prevailing presence and ubiquitousness of spirits is far more pronounced in African beliefs than in those of the religions of the intellectualist, European world. But here again, as compared with the rest of the world, it is a matter of degree. The Western person is given more and more today to spiritualism or occultism. Why is that so? Should we not all admit that man's restless spirit is forever refusing to be smothered under the weight of intellectualism; that as the needle inevitably turns toward the north, so is man's spirit ever seeking to reach the unseen, the unknown, and establish communion for its own peace? . . .

There is a sense in which 'animism' forms a vital element in the make-up of religion in Africa; if 'animism' is properly defined as a recognition of the existence of Spirit or spirits as separate from the material. It is, in fact, a positive denial of the notion that there are people anywhere in the world whose worship is offered to material objects or natural phenomena. We accept 'animism' as applicable to African traditional religion if it is understood in the sense of the recognition of the fact that man's spirit is in communication and communion with the Divine Spirit. In this sense, it refers to all worship ultimately to the Divine Spirit, often through ministering spirits; it recognizes that material cult-objects (including buildings) can be dedicated to the Divine Spirit or to spirits and therefore become meet for worship - a place where man beholds the 'mercy-seat' or an object through which the world invisible is viewed, the world inapprehensible clutched; it emphasizes the fact that the Divine Spirit and spirits do not depend for their being on the material objects used as cult-objects - the spirits are never bound to the material objects; the destruction of such objects does not affect the being of the Spirit.

Thus, 'animism' properly defined cannot be predicated as a monopoly of Africa or of any other race. The being of Christianity as of any religion is grounded on the fact that 'God is Spirit'. 'Animism' can, therefore, be predicated as part-definition of every religion. But it is inappropriate as the name for African traditional religion; the derogatory and abusive nomenclature of Africans as 'animists' should cease.⁵⁷

How does a high-school level textbook explain classical or traditional African religions in a reasonably relevant and accurate manner? The following is a good example.

GOD AND SPIRITS

Nearly all the African religions believe in a Supreme Being or God who created the earth and all mankind. God then withdrew and left the affairs of the world to man. God is remote (far away) and not often prayed to. Only in case of major crises do people seek God's help.

Between God and man are the lesser gods and ancestor spirits. These gods are believed to live in rivers, caves, mountains and trees. Africans do not worship rivers and mountains. They worship the spiritual forces that these things represent. These spirits are of great importance in man's daily life and are always close to him. Since Africans live close to nature, if the rains fail or the crops are flooded or eaten by pests, people may be threatened by starvation. Therefore, it is best to keep the gods on your side.

It is believed that the ancestral spirits watch over the fortunes of their descendants. These spirits can punish the living if they are forgotten and not honored. Therefore, on all important occasions - such as births, deaths, initiation ceremonies, weddings, planting and harvesting - prayers and offerings are made to the departed ancestors. Even on lesser occasions, for example, the building of a new house or the judging of a person accused of wrongdoing, the spirits of the ancestors are appealed to for guidance and are offered beer or some other offering. In their prayers, Africans ask for health for themselves and their families, for the welfare of the tribe as a whole, and for the fertility of their fields. Africans do not worship their ancestors; they communicate with them. We have learned how important the family is to African people. This includes both the living and the dead members of the family. Therefore, Africans consider it only right to involve the spirits of the dead ancestors in the affairs of the living.

THE MEDICINE MAN

When misfortune strikes, Africans turn to a diviner, or medicine man, to discover the cause of the misfortune. The diviner is believed to have special powers which enable him to find out the cause as well as the cure for whatever has happened. The African may know the scientific cause for the calamity, for instance, that malaria is caused by a mosquito bite. But this does not explain why that particular person was bitten. When tragedy occurs, people usually ask the question "why me?" The diviner tries to find out why a certain misfortune has befallen a particular person or group. Often the reason is the anger of an ancestor whose spirit has been neglected and is therefore punishing the descendent . . .

Many Africans believe that in case of illness medical treatment alone is not enough. This may cure the symptoms but not the basic cause of the disease. Thus, although Africans may go to a clinic for treatment, at the same time they will follow the ritual that has been described. For this reason the diviner has great influence in most African tribes.

In many cases magic and religion go hand in hand, and sometimes it is not easy to separate the two. Magic may

be used to protect the individual against illness or misfortune; to guarantee success in agriculture, hunting and even love, and sometimes even to bring harm to another person. This last type of magic can bring severe punishment to the person who practices it. In general, the purpose of magic is to give people confidence in difficult situations. Many people carry a charm with them to protect them from danger.⁵⁸

In summary, then, the springs of religion and ritual life lie in kinship and social organization. Reverence of ancestors and the affirmation of life are the two most fundamental aspects of classical African religion which impinges on every aspect of society. Whereas the West often assumes that religion is a system of belief which includes the way that certain people look at the world, classical African religions reflect the way the community views the totality of life.

XIII. EXAGGERATION, OVERGENERALIZATION AND OVERSIMPLIFICATION

Many statements and explanations about Africa in social studies texts are either overgeneralized, exaggerated, or simplistic. The following is an example of such a simplistic explanation of economic problems in Africa:

The new nations of Africa must give their people the feeling that they are on the way to more of the good life if they are to hold the people's loyalty. No longer can discontent in the village, city slums, low wages or any other problem be blamed on a ruling colonial power. The new nations can and do trace the roots of many of their problems to colonial policies. But they have to find their own answers.⁵⁹

Although this paragraph raises very real conditions about the rising expectations of African peoples and the demand for the new governments to meet those needs, the authors fail to explain the complexity of today's conditions when they state, "But they have to find their own answers."

Since independence, the expectations of African peoples have risen to levels where no single government has been able to satisfy all the demands for more jobs, better housing and healthcare, more schools and a better standard of living in general. This situation is not unique to African nations; no nation can claim to have met all of the expectations of its people. A good share of the financial resources of most African governments depend on the prices of commodities on the world markets, prices which are fixed by the wealthier consumer, industrial nations of the world. These wealthier nations include the former colonial powers. Statements such as the ones given in the paragraph quoted above imply that political independence from colonial rule is total independence. They fail to take into consideration the question of economic control by international corporations which frequently replaces

the outright political control of colonial times by exerting similar controls on the possibilities of economic development in African countries.

For a balanced view of the economic influence which the industrialized nations have on Africa, students should be exposed to more information than is usually found in the press and in textbooks. These sources usually do not define the term "foreign aid" and lead students to believe that foreign aid is some kind of charity.⁶⁰ We suggest that teachers explain that foreign aid usually is a long-term low-interest loan; not a gift. Students also should understand that these same nations which give foreign aid also control the prices of African commodities on the world market. It is estimated that during the "development decade" of 1960-70, African nations lost two to three times the amount of foreign aid which they received due to fluctuations of prices on the depressed world commodity markets. Also, only a small portion of foreign aid from donor nations goes to Africa. The following information on United States foreign aid is an example of the priority given to Africa in the foreign aid programs of the wealthier Western nations.

**Total United States Foreign Aid to Selected
Areas and Countries
1945-1970⁶¹**

Korea	\$8,035 million
France	7,060
Vietnam	6,240
Taiwan/Formosa	4,843
Greece	3,662
West Germany	3,652
Spain	2,000
North Africa	2,590
Africa South of the Sahara	2,481

Of that aid which goes to Africa, more is provided for nations which are friendly to the donor and which support the donor's views on economic and international issues. For example, Zaire, Ivory Coast and Kenya receive far more aid from Western controlled sources than do Tanzania, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau or Guinea-Conakry. It would not be unfair to assume that political and economic differences, e.g. pro-West as opposed to non-aligned or socialist ideologies, account for a substantial amount of the aid preference. Likewise, socialist donor countries provide more aid to governments which are sympathetic to the socialist ideology. But this aid is much less significant than the power held by the industrialized Western nations through control of world markets and through the ability to extend foreign aid and credits.

Other examples of exaggeration and overgeneralization found in textbooks include:

The tribal African has lived most of his life in a world of sickness. From the time he was born, he has probably had many diseases.⁶²

This statement leads the reader to think that "the tribal African" - an unfortunate generalization in itself - is chronically ill and lives in a "world of sickness." The statement needs very careful clarification to avoid a strong negative reaction and confirmation of stereotypes. It is true that there are widespread debilitating diseases in tropical countries and that many African people suffer from river blindness, tuberculosis, bilharzia, sleeping sickness, malaria, etc. But the student must be informed that African governments are making major strides to conquer these problems, and that the major underlying problems which gives force to these diseases is malnutrition, which is based on economic problems. Many African people live in a world of happiness, good health and personal achievement; not all are afflicted with chronic health problems.

The question of political stability has been previously discussed. Another theme related to this is the idea of war, unrest, violence and "terror" as the normal state of affairs in African societies.

... there is still unrest in the African world . . . The world is worried that a small war in sub-Saharan Africa could easily grow into a world war.⁶³

or:

Terror and sabotage have ignited the continent from one end to another.⁶⁴

It is certainly true that there have been political problems and changes of government in many African countries - including civil wars in some (e.g., Zaire, Nigeria, Angola, Sudan, Rwanda and Burundi). But in most countries which underwent political changes, the everyday life of most of the people has not been disrupted. Change from civilian to military rule in many African countries has occurred with very little bloodshed, and very few people have been involved in "terror", "sabotage" and dramatic unrest.

Leinwand's text on world history presents a related stereotype about the African "barbarism", "savagery", and racial enmity toward whites which Kenyans are supposed to have shown in their protests and revolts against British colonialism.

South of the Sahara, restlessness, discord and bloodshed marked relations between black and whites (Europeans). In the British colony of Kenya, the Africans returned to tribal customs and organized a rebellion against the British. The Mau Mau, as the rebellion was called, let loose a "reign of terror" against the Europeans. For sheer savagery, the onslaught of the Mau Mau was not matched in all of Africa. Not only were Europeans killed, but tribesmen who refused to cooperate with the Mau Mau were likewise slaughtered. It took further bloodshed before the Mau Mau rebellion was put down. The rebellion lasted from 1953 until 1961. Although the people of Kenya had many fair complaints, including demands for a greater share of the more fertile lands, the Mau Mau rebellion was a step back into barbarism. Nevertheless, it revealed the depths to which Africans were moved to do something to establish their own ways of living.⁶⁵

A closer look at the history of the "Mau Mau Rebellion" shows that the atmosphere of a "reign of terror" was created more by the colonial and overseas press than by the activities of the Kenya Land and Freedom Army, whose rebellion was popularly called "Mau Mau" by the British. On the manner in which the British press handled the news of the rebellion, some leaders of the Kenya Land and Freedom Army gave the following comment:

British propaganda - and not only British - has been remarkably successful in equating the revolt of a large section of the people of Kenya with barbarism and savagery . . . The very name "Mau Mau" is an illustration of how successful propaganda can damn an entire movement to which thousands sacrificed everything, including their lives, by attaching to it an appellation that conjures up all the clichés about the "dark continent" which still crowd the European mind.⁶⁶

Fewer than 50 white people were killed in the "Mau Mau Rebellion." A much larger number of Africans were killed. But more lives were lost during the British retaliation against the Kenya Land and Freedom Army, which was striving to regain independence and ownership of the fertile highlands of Kenya which the white settlers had appropriated for themselves. For a more accurate view of the so-called "Mau Mau" than that provided in texts, we recommend two books⁶⁷ and three films entitled *Mau Mau*, *White Man's Country* and *Kenyatta*.⁶⁸

Other examples of simplistic, exaggerated, or overgeneralized statements found in textbooks are ones that state that Africans love to dance, that Africans are happy people, or that there are no lonely widows and no orphans and orphanages in Africa. Many, not all, Africans, like people anywhere, enjoy dancing at certain times. Africa has its share of happy and unhappy people and, like all peoples, the same individual is happy at one time and unhappy at other times. In fact, there must be a great deal of unhappiness in a continent with a very high rate of infant mortality, intermittent periods of famine for some, and many other problems of social change and oppression such as the ones created by the apartheid policy. An African widow is often lonely in a crowd just like a widow in any other part of the world. In many parts of urbanized Africa, there are orphanages for children whose relatives have not been able to take care of them.

Africa is a very large continent with over 50 countries and 350 million people. There are too many cultural, historical, social, political, and economic diversities which do not allow such overgeneralizations and simplistic statements.

XIV. OUTDATED INFORMATION

Because of fast political and other changes in many African countries many texts have outdated information. For example, a textbook only three or four years old may be easily outdated as to the type of governments several African countries now have. Updating

information on such topics can be accomplished by referring to several periodicals dealing with African affairs. But when it comes to explanations of why and how different political and other changes take place in African countries, a more discriminating choice of sources is necessary. As one American Africanist puts it:

The *Washington Post*, probably the most important news source of American political decision makers, covers Africa's fifty-two nations and 350,000,000 people with one reporter, who, within a few days was ordered to cover the independence of Mozambique, the coup against the Emperor of Ethiopia, and the Ali-Foreman fight in Zaire. This is an impossible assignment! (as one Madison, Wisconsin, newspaper editor noted, there is more and better reporting on Africa in one weekly airmail issue edition of the British *Manchester Guardian* than in all the American national press combined.) Those who know Africa and read the U.S. press' political reporting frequently find that stories are shallow, and stereotypical, overemphasizing the importance of ethnicity and tribe, fixated on the bizarre and exotic, primarily dependent on white expatriates for information and sometimes covertly allied with white racist interests.⁶⁹

Virtually all media, the three national TV networks, radio and such popular national magazines and newspapers as *Time*, *Newsweek*, *National Geographic*, *New York Times*, and even the *Christian Science Monitor* fall prey to some of this kind of reporting. For alternate points of view and current political analyses of events in Africa we recommend reading African newspapers, and British and French journals such as *Africa*, and *Africa News*, *Africa Report*, and publications of the American Committee on Africa, the Washington Office on Africa, and of the Trans Africa organization.

CONCLUSION

Evaluation of teaching materials about Africa raises many questions: What have the authors chosen as priorities for focus and emphasis? What have they ignored? Does the student learn to value and to understand human commonalities and differences across cultural lines? Are any negative, misinformed stereotypes broken and replaced with images of African peoples and cultures as dynamic, complex, and rich in historical heritage and contemporary diversity?

When discussing political issues and types of governments, does the material present the context of events rather than making simplistic generalizations about African dictatorships, communism in Africa, one party states, etc.? Are the less sensational political leaders and systems studied?

Are rural peoples studied as specific to a particular region so that students understand that there are no nomads in Zambia; no Dogon cliff dwellers in Botswana; no Orthodox Christian rural religious communities in Liberia? If these rural communities are studied, they should be placed carefully in the context of a national or regional study. It is very common for

young people to generalize from what they learn about one group of people in Africa as common throughout the entire continent. This confusion can best be avoided by doing country-specific studies rather than a continent-wide survey. A sequence in social studies such as "China, Japan, India, Africa" should be replaced by "China, Japan, India, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania" or other specific countries.

Most social studies materials about Africa do not give sufficient attention to urban societies. It is usually true that students of any age are more interested in exotic, rural peoples who are "different" than in urban dwellers who share many values and lifestyles with urban dwellers world wide. However, the rural image of Africa is deeply ingrained in so many peoples' minds, that it is imperative that we, as teachers, emphasize the importance of urban peoples in Africa, in early history as well as in the colonial and post-colonial periods.

Animal life is a favorite topic for African studies. How refreshing it would be if domestic animals, fish,

and birds were considered part of the animal world! A study of these important and neglected components of the animal kingdom could lead to significant understanding of the role of animal life in human history. People are surely more important than animals; our study of Africa must be people-centered, not dominated by the over-abundant and easily procured films on big game and wild life - all of which reaffirm stereotypes about the continent.

African studies can have a significant impact on the revitalized interest in global education and international studies. Issues such as human rights, the law of the seas, women's liberation, international economic order, food, health and population, peace, energy, the arts, future societies, etc., - all of these important human concerns are exemplified in Africa - all can be substantiated and studied from an African perspective.

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